



## ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

### **LEED® for New Construction**

#### **What is LEED for New Construction?**

LEED for New Construction and Major Renovations is a rating system for buildings that was designed to guide and distinguish high performance buildings that have less of an impact on the environment, are healthier for those who work and/or live in the building, and are more profitable than their conventional counterparts.

The LEED for New Construction Rating System can be applied to commercial, institutional and high-rise residential projects, with a focus on office buildings. Practitioners have also applied the system to K-12 schools, multi-unit residential buildings, manufacturing plants, laboratories and many other building types.

#### **How does LEED for New Construction work?**

LEED for New Construction is a performance-oriented rating system where building projects earn points for satisfying criterion designed to address specific environmental impacts inherent in the design, construction, operations and management of a building.

The LEED rating system is organized into five environmental categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. An additional category, Innovation and Design, awards points to LEED projects that develop new solutions, employ new technologies, educate, or realize exemplary performance in another area.

#### **What is the point breakdown for LEED for New Construction?**

LEED for New Construction ratings are awarded according to the following scale:

Certified: 26-32 points

Silver: 33-38 points

Gold: 39-51 points

Platinum: 52-69 points

#### **What are the benefits of LEED for New Construction?**

LEED for New Construction offers many benefits including environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance and health advantages. LEED certified projects cost less to operate and maintain, are energy- and water-efficient, have higher lease-up rates than conventional buildings in their markets, and contribute to occupant health and productivity.

#### **Why would a building choose to get LEED Certified?**

LEED certification is an achievement that signifies that the building is designed and is operating exactly as it was intended. LEED certification is third party verification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) that helps owners can measure and manage

their properties. LEED Certification is very similar the nutrition label on packaged foods – it is information about the building that will help guide decision making.

**Who should use LEED for New Construction?**

LEED for New Construction was designed primarily for new construction office buildings, but it has been applied to many other building types. Commercial occupancies include (but are not limited to) offices, retails and service establishments, institutional buildings (libraries, schools, museums, places of worship, etc.), hotels and residential buildings of four or more stories.

**How was LEED for New Construction developed?**

LEED for New Construction was developed through an open, consensus-based process in USGBC committees. Each volunteer committee is composed of a diverse group of practitioners and experts representing a cross-section of the building and construction industry. Any USGBC member can serve on a committee, and all committee procedures and proceedings are available at [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

**Where can I get an updated copy of the LEED for New Construction Rating System?**

The LEED for New Construction Reference Guide is available for purchase on the [USGBC Web site](http://www.usgbc.org). The LEED for New Construction Reference Guide Introduction Chapter is now available for free download on the [LEED for New Construction Web page](http://www.usgbc.org).

**What is the process for LEED certification?**

LEED Certification steps:

1. Register eligible building via [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)
2. Identify and implement operational improvements and equipment upgrades necessary to obtain certification
3. Prepare your application by documenting building performance data and operational procedures
4. Submit certification application to the USGBC via LEED Online for review and provide any supplemental information deemed necessary by the reviewers
5. Receive a final LEED certification review from the USGBC

**What educational programs are available to learn more about LEED?**

USGBC has developed LEED training workshops and they are listed on the USGBC Web site as they are scheduled or by [clicking here](http://www.usgbc.org).

**Is professional accreditation available specifically for LEED for New Construction?**

Yes, USGBC offers three exam tracks towards earning the LEED Accredited Profession (LEED AP) credential, including New Construction. The LEED for New Construction AP track is designed for professionals participating in the design and construction phases of high performance, healthful, durable, affordable and environmentally sound commercial, institutional and high-rise residential buildings.

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Other tracks in the LEED AP program are available for professionals in the commercial interior industry and for facility managers. LEED Professional Accreditation distinguishes building professionals with the knowledge and skills to successfully steward the integrated design and LEED certification process. LEED Accredited Professionals have demonstrated a thorough understanding of green building practices and principles and familiarity with LEED requirements, resources, and processes.